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ABSTRACT

This process model for training migrant parents to participate in the total development of their children can be used by those who wish to plan and/or improve the training process. Successful migrant training programs are shown to require: involvement of competent, action-oriented people; effective communication; planners who are skilled in determining needs; access to school facilities; and assurance of a commitment of the migrant parents. Three fundamental criteria for a comprehensive training model are provided: (1) the school and the parent must demonstrate a common concern for the child's welfare; (2) the model must supplement and enrich existing educational programs; and (3) the model must broaden learning opportunities. Seven basic steps in planning a model are discussed: determining need, preparing objectives, identifying resources, designing a program, recruiting migrant parents, orientation and training program, and evaluation. A list of teacher and migrant parent responsibilities are incorporated into the text, along with a list of ways to show appreciation to migrant parents who participate. (AH)

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A MODEL FOR TRAINING MIGRANT PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TOTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN

A paper presented by Dr. Felipe Veloz at the Sixteenth Annual National Migrant Child Education Conference, April 24-29, 1982, San Juan Puerto Rico.

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> Parents must make room in their hearts and in their house and then in their schedule for their children. No poor parent is too poor to do that and no middle-class parent is too busy.
>
> Jesse Jackson

The main purpose for being at this Migrant Child Education Conference is to share a process model for training migrant parents to participate in the total development of their children. I believe that this model can be used by those who wish to plan and/or improve the training process for migrant parents to participate in the school program.

It is essential for students, teachers and parents to engage in meaningful and effective relationships toward improving the educational needs of their children. To develop a meaningful relationship, students, teachers and parents must learn to consider the school as a culture, a culture that must be understood from both the inside and the outside of the school. Parent participation is a very special form of caring.

According to a recent Gallup poll (1981), parents' lack of interest accounts for 5% of major problems. George Gallup has recently commented that: "A careful examination of survey findings for the past 10-year period leads to this conclusion: Many of the problems of the schools can be solved only if

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parents become more involved than they presently are in the educational process. Parents must, in fact, be regarded as part of the teaching team. A joint effort by parents and teachers is essential to deal more successfully with problems of discipline, motivation, and the development of good work habits at home and in school."

There are many concerned parents such as yourselves that are joining together to form groups to make more effective the educational process.

The National Committee for Citizens in Education, has just published an annotated bibliography (Henderson, 1981) that includes 35 studies, each of which indicates that parent participation is associated with gains in student achievement, and which taken together, suggest strongly that without legitimate parent involvement, schools will not succeed as well as they could.

It was reported in Practical Applications of Research (PDK Newsletter,1982) that in Charles Mowry's study (1972) of Head Start for the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare it was found that early childhood education programs make a big difference, and that programs with strong parent participation are more successful than programs with less parent participation.

A successful migrant parent training program requires the involvement of competent and action-oriented people. It is important to recognize that a successful model for training is dependent upon the coordination of two essential groups, the planners and the implementers. In essence the task of the planners will be the selection, coordination and scheduling of the potentially diverse planning activities. The primary function of the implementers is to carry out the model training plan.

Effective communication is an essential part of any successful model for training migrant parents. If the planners are to create an outstanding migrant parent training program, it is necessary for them to be in continuous, frank and sympathetic communication with those who are to implement the program.

A good training program is not the product of a planner working in seclusion; it is not the product of a citizen's committee; it is not the result of petty checking by the administration and it is not a product of a good superintendent of schools. A good model for training migrant parents is a cooperative effort, of both planners and implementers, to develop a meaningful educational experience not only for all children but for all society.

It is important that the training planners, who may be two or three people, be skilled in determining needs. Once needs have been identified the program planners must then turn to the task of selecting migrant parents who will constitute the larger planning group. The charge of the planning group is to recommend solutions to meet the needs which have been determined as critical and in need of resolution. Limitations on the effectiveness of the planning group will be a test of the skill of the planner as he/she directs and coordinates the efforts of that group.

In addition, the school facilities of a given community need to be utilized so that the desired philosophy, purpose, policies, and practices agreed upon by the community and school staff may be effectively implemented. From philosophies come purposes, from purposes come policies, from policies come practices. A comprehensive model for training migrant parents in any school should have at the forefront three fundamental criteria which must be provided for. These are:

1. The school and the parent must demonstrate a common concern for the welfare of the child, and a cooperative partnership between them must be developed.
2. The purpose of the model for migrant parent training must be able to supplement and enrich the existing educational program of the school.
3. The model for migrant parent training must broaden learning opportunities for each student.

Also, many migrant parent training programs do not have clearly defined purposes or support. Before one can begin implementing a migrant parent training program those developing the program must be assured of a commitment to the involvement of migrant parents by the district. Indication that a migrant parent training program is wanted and needed can be demonstrated in the following manner:

1. A resolution of support by the school board;
2. Establishment of a migrant parent advisory committee to prepare and/or review overall program policies and design;
3. Support of the teaching faculty for parental participation. Regardless of the specific model developed, there are 7 basic steps that must be considered. The remainder of this paper will focus on the 7 points.

Once the decision to establish planning is made, the following steps are basic:

1. Determine needs -- A need is the gap between what is and what should be. Efforts should be particularly focused upon serious gaps in the present educational development of migrant students. Studies that identify these gaps are necessary to provide a basis for the selection of objectives to be given primary emphasis.
2. Prepare objectives -- After needs have been selected from the tenative list, it is important that only those needs having highest priority for migrant parents and children be considered. As with any list of important objectives, it is necessary to state the objectives most useful in selecting learning experiences. The rationale for selecting attainable objectives rests with the teacher. The objectives should identify what the children should learn, why they should learn it, and how they should learn.

3. Identify resources -- Human, financial and material resources should be identified based on the needs and objectives of the migrant parent training program. Potential parental participants of the community, such as students, parents, business and industry personnel and other interested parties should be encouraged to participate. In addition, regardless of the community size, a steering committee of migrant parents should generally be formulated. Specific criteria for membership in this group must be clearly stated to avoid personal discord. Criteria for committee membership should include strong consideration of those capable of bringing financial and material resources to the program, together with contacts within the community supportive of the goals of the plan. At this juncture it is essential that necessary materials, funds and personnel be committed and identified. This action is critically necessary prior to the development of a migrant parent training program design.

4. Program design -- Program design is an extremely critical component in the planning process. It is difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate flaws in any program planning venture. However, in developing a program design for migrant parent training the following steps are recommended:

    a. arrange for securing administrative plan review and approval.
    b. define roles and tasks of school personnel and migrant parent participants.
    c. develop policy guidelines.
    d. prepare personnel guidelines specifically for migrant parent participants which reflect administrative policy.
    e. prepare a realistic budget and provide documented evidence to support your request.

f. identify a program coordinator, preferably a person already on the school staff.

g. develop a recruitment plan that is attainable and feasible.

h. develop a procedure that provides for training of both school personnel and migrant parent participation.

5. Recruitment of migrant parent participation -- It cannot be over-emphasized that migrant parent participation programs must develop from an identified need. Anyone working with a program will participate more actively if there are clearly articulated role responsibilities. All participants need to know what is expected of them and what they, in turn, can expect of others. Policies should be established and available in a rules and guidelines handbook,

After the planned program has been agreed upon and the needs of the school have been determined, procedures for the identification and selection of potential migrant parent participants should be developed. Migrant parent participants should have at least the following qualifications:

a. interest in education and the community

b. a desire to help

c. dependability

d. commitment to the program

e. enjoyment of children

f. good health

The recruitment of participants may be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:

a. announcement in the school publication and local press.

b. announcements in bulletins of local churches.

c. notification of local civic organizations.

And, you may want to add other requirements. This screening should provide a basis for assigning responsibilities and not for rejecting those who wish to help; there is always a place for every interested migrant parent to make a contribution.

Migrant parent recruitment is a vital process requiring careful planning. A recruitment plan should be written to meet the needs of the school, of an educational program, or of a special project occurring at various seasons of the year.

6. Orientation and training program -- In an attempt to develop the self-confidence of migrant parents in their ability to contribute to the learning opportunities for each student, a well planned teacher-migrant parent orientation is a must. Migrant parents and staff should know what the program is and is not. Many migrant parent participation programs fail because there is a lack of clearly written, responsibilities for the administrator, teacher and migrant parent. It is the responsibility of the administration to provide orientation and training activities for the following aims:

    a. discussing of the program with the school staff and enlisting their support.
    b. outlining specific procedures to be followed by the migrant participants.
    c. assisting in the evaluation of the services performed by migrant parent participants.

The responsibilities of the teachers in the work of migrant parent participants should include the following but not be limited to:

a. Orienting the migrant parent to the kind of help needed and having a variety of assigned tasks that will enhance the migrant parent participants' skills in everyday classroom activities.

b. Giving specific directions.

c. Briefing the migrant parent in fire drills and discussing procedures. Introducing them to the teacher next door.

d. Anticipating information needed by the migrant parent participant to carry out assigned tasks. Showing where to find materials, how to set up an activity, what books to use with a group, etc.

e. Telling him/her what limits have been set, what special individual needs children have and what level of performance to expect of the children.

f. Avoiding assigning responsibilities beyond the migrant parent's ability, and not leaving a parent with too many children or too large an area to supervise.

g. Expecting the migrant parent participants t be business-like about attendance, to be on time, stay with assigned responsibilities, and to accept direction from the teacher.

Although the assignment responsibility is that of migrant parent participation, the commitment is professional.

After reading the above suggested responsibilities, there is little doubt that the teacher is the key person in guiding the practical learning experiences of migrant parent participants.

The responsibilities of the migrant parent participant are also important. It is only when he/she feels they are a part of the

school team he/she tend to impart to the community an appreciation and understanding of the job being done by school personnel. This feeling of appreciation and understanding comes about only when there is expressed concern for, interest in, and acceptance of both migrant parent participant and staff. The migrant parent is usually willing to:

1. Offer supportive and supplemental services under professional supervision and direction.
2. Be punctual and reliable in fulfilling the assignment and notifying the school in case of absence.
3. Become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices.
4. Adjust to the teacher's way of doing things and following his/her directions.
5. Plan with the teacher(s) for future activities.

The greatest reward a migrant parent participant can experience is the feeling of contributing something of worth to the students and the school. No one will deny that even the most idealistic person likes to know that someone is pleased with services rendered. A very simple but sincere public thanks goes a long way to show appreciation.

Some schools are currently doing the following to show appreciation:

a. writing letters of appreciation.
b. giving certificates of recognition.
c. providing for special programs, coffees, pot luck meals.
d. writing articles in a newsletter and/or in the school paper.
e. giving end-of-year awards.
f. extending invitation to faculty events.

g. providing complimentary tickets to certain school activities.

h. giving recognition at school events.

Staff and students need to be aware of the importance of showing gratitude for services that a migrant parent participant provides as an integral member of the school.

7. Evaluation -- As with anything that is worth doing, evaluation must play a definite role. In evaluating the Migrant Parent Training Program one should start with the initial planned objectives and continue throughout each of the components of the program. It is very difficult to assess the total program yearly. However, we should analyze the generated data of each component prior to making any decisions about the program. In the process of making effective decisions we should do the folloiwng:

   a. ask questions that focus on important decisions.

   b. establish valid criteria for judging information.

   c. use appropriate means to gather data.

An evaluation scheme for a Migrant Parent Training Program might be:

1 MAJOR QUESTIONS	2 SAMPLE CRITERIA	3 SAMPLE MEANS
1. Are we working on a real need?	Societal Goals Job Market	Interviews
2. Is our objective manageable?	Understandable Personnel available Techniques available	Questionnaire Volunteer forms Interview expert
3. Are volunteers using the procedures?	Check practice with description of procedures	Observation Logs
4. Do the procedures work?	Client opinion Expert opinion	Questionnaire Observation

5.	Does the product match the objective	Check with stated objectives	Tests & narrative records (1)

The analysis of the above approach suggests an evaluation technique that can be developed to evaluate a migrant parent participation program. It should be made clear that the purpose of the program evaluation is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program's activities and their usefulness. One of the serious problems concerning program evaluation is a too-narrow view of the process of evaluation and the usefulness of that information.

It is my hope that the ideas presented in this paper, although not new, have given you a different perspective that will be of value to you in planning for migrant parent training in your school. It cannot be overemphasized that the migrant parent participation program must be your program and it must evolve from the needs of your school. It is your realization of the migrant parent potential in your community that will mean a stronger more meaningful educational experience for all migrant children.

1. The Recruitment Leadership and Training Institute, Volunteers in Education, A Handbook for Coordinators of Volunteer Programs, June 1975, p. 128.